

*Sierra Nevada Conservancy- Strategic Opportunity Grant Program
October 1, 2007*

2. Project Summary

The Love Creek Working Forest is located in Calaveras County, CA just outside of the historic town of Arnold. The property consists of 4 parcels encompassing approximately 413 acres of Sierran Mixed Conifer forestland in the headwaters of Love Creek. The property has been owned and stewarded by the Smith Family since 1946, and has been certified as well managed for sustainable forests, clean water, healthy wildlife habitat, and recreational opportunities by the American Tree Farm System since the 1960's. The Love Creek property shares boundaries on multiple sides with the Big Trees State Park and the Stanislaus National Forest. Located within a mile of the North Grove of giant sequoias in Big Trees State Park, the private forestlands on this property create an ecological and scenic buffer for popular public lands.

The preservation of the Love Creek Working Forest is consistent with the Calaveras County General Plan (1996) and the program area goals identified by the Sierra Nevada Conservancy's Strategic Plan (2006). The project will protect open space; recreational lands; working forest landscapes; and natural resources including the quality of water, air and wildlife habitat.

The protection of the Love Creek Working Forest through a permanent conservation easement will address the threats to water quality and wildlife habitat through its restrictions, which will dedicate the property to relatively natural forest habitats and traditional uses of forestry and compatible recreation. The easement will prohibit subdivision, limit possible future development, restore the forest to later seral characteristics through forestry restrictions, provide increased protection to water resources through more protective buffers than the CA Forest Practices Act, and protect the scenic buffer along the shared borders with public park lands.

The expanded federal income tax benefits under H.R. 4, currently only available through the end of this year, have made it feasible for the Smith Family to donate a conservation easement on their property to the Pacific Forest Trust (PFT). With the increasing development pressures spurred by second home development in Calaveras County, the Smith Family would like to take advantage of their opportunity to permanently protect their working forest property. PFT respectfully requests \$25,000 from the Sierra Nevada Conservancy in order to cover the costs associated with project planning and management, easement negotiations, and baseline/monitoring report development. The Conservancy's grant funds would be leveraged by nearly \$1,520,000 of in-kind and monetary match from the landowner.